minimum wages rates applicable to workers in various occupations are implemented fully, in letter and spirit and

(b) whether Government are granting notified minimum wages to workers engaged in developmental programmes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M. P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) The enforcement machinery set up for enforcing provisions of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 is expected to conduct inspection and taken action against defaulting employer whenever any violation to the Act is detected.

(b) Under the rural developmental programmes like Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, wages are to be paid as per minimum rates of wages as notified by the concerned State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations for the relevant scheduled employment. The Central Government on its part have informed the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations that it will withhold the grants to the States/Union Terriories in case the implementing agencies do not pay the minimum notified wages to the workers employed in the rural developmental programme.

Agenda in the Labour Ministers' conference

2576. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Conference of Labour Ministers was held in New Delhi in July, this year;

(b) if so, what were the main items on the agenda;

(c) what decisions were taken therein on the question of providing more teeth, vigour and dimensions to the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 and enacting a Central law on farm workers; and

(d) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) and (b) A conference of State Labour Ministers was held on 7-8th July, 1997 to review the progress in the implementation of the directives of the Supreme Court on child labour and to discuss the issue of suitable legislative framework to address the problem of child labour, the provisions of the Central Legislation on Agricultural Workers and dual control on the administration of medical care in ESI Corporation.

(c) and (d) In the conference certain suggestions were made to make Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, more effective. These suggestions, inter alia, included that the burden of proof in regard to age and employment of child should be on the employer, the offence should be made a cognizable one and the penalties should be more stringent and deterrent. These suggestions would be duly taken into account while finalising the amendment proposals.

In regard to the proposed central legislation on agricultural workers, representatives of State Govt., expressed different views. While the State of West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Tripura, Kerala, Rajasthan, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Orissa, Jammu & Kashmir, Goa, Assam Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Andaman Nicobar Islands, National Capital Territory of Delhi & Union Territory of Chandigarh supported the proposed legislation, the State Govt. of Punab, Haryana, Arunachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat had certain reservation about it in view of the local condition prevailing in these States.